

IR News Bulletin – Focus on International Educational Projects

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1. Introduction

International educational projects are externally funded projects carried out together with an international consortium of higher education institutions and other relevant business and cultural organizations. International educational projects focus primarily on internationalization of higher education and generally involve joint degrees, curriculum development and mobility of staff and students. They may also focus on areas such as innovation in pedagogical methods or use of ICT in education and entrepreneurial education.

The main funding organizations for International educational projects are EU- Education Audio visual Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Nordic Council of Ministers. Erasmus+, Nordplus, North South South, China Programme and HEI ICI (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument) are some of the important funding tools funded by these organizations.

Inside pages on [International educational projects](#) provide elaborate information on the funding programmes, application procedures and statistics on the educational projects.

2. International Educational Projects – As strategic tools for internationalization

International educational projects have been vital in supporting Aalto's internationalization. Since 2010, Aalto has been involved in more than 60 international educational projects with many international partners and these projects have been significant contributors towards Aalto's internationalization in areas such as,

- Building and promoting international partnerships
- Cooperating with other universities in multidisciplinary fields
- Improving Aalto's international visibility
- Enhancing international recruitment
- Increasing international mobility of faculty, staff and students
- Encouraging and developing international teaching and studying and
- Sharing Finnish expertise in educational capacity building in developing nations

Mervi Rantanen, Manager for International Relations, sees the added value of the educational projects in particular in the following two areas: *“The projects can provide for a great tool for development of our own education and teaching, and for internationalization of teaching. Secondly, the projects can and should be used as strategic tools when implementing the Schools’ strategies, be it for development of international partnerships, global visibility, mobility of staff and students, or for curriculum development”*.

3. Internationalization possibilities offered by educational Projects

International Educational Projects provide several possibilities for the professional development, innovation in teaching and learning and international mobility for faculty, staff and students. Apart from the recognizable advantages of enriching Aalto’s cooperation with universities worldwide, the projects have been instrumental in realizing the following concrete benefits;

- ***Development of Joint Programmes, grants and scholarships***

Former EU-Erasmus Mundus funding (currently Erasmus+ Joint Master’s) offer grants for the development and implementation of joint Masters and Doctoral programmes for 3-5 years along with mobility grants and scholarships. Six Erasmus Mundus joint degree programmes have opened the doors to many high quality students from all around the world and have strengthened Aalto’s visibility in the international educational sector.

In the view of Eija Kujanpää, IR Manager, School of Science, *“the participation to Erasmus Mundus has strongly supported the recruitment of international talents to Aalto SCI. Most of these Erasmus Mundus-graduates are quickly employed in our country or in other European countries where they have studied during the programme. The students receive double degree and some of them continue their studies for doctoral degree. The programme supports also the mobility of academic staff with scholarships for visiting professors and enables their participation in carrying out teaching activities and developing joint research activities”*.

Four different Erasmus Mundus cooperation projects (Formerly Action 2 and currently Erasmus+ International Opening) in Aalto offer grants possibility for scholars and staff for education and research cooperation with India, South Korea, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and some of Europe’s Eastern neighboring countries.

Anita Bisi, IR Manager, School of Electrical Engineering appreciates the scholarships offerings from the Erasmus Mundus cooperation as, *“for undergraduate students (BSc and MSc) the grant is good, 1000 EUR per month plus travel expenses and insurance. Projects offer also an additional support for researchers to get and strengthen international academic contacts and cooperation. Because these grants are targeted for third countries outside the European Union, they open a great opportunity to cultural learning and networking in distant areas and new growing economies”*.

- ***Strengthening Nordic Cooperation through Joint degrees and Curriculum Development***

Nordic Masters and Nordplus funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers has supported the development of five Nordic Masters programmes (double degrees) with Nordic Five Tech network and three more programmes with other Nordic Universities.

Sara Sokolnicki, IR Manager, School of Engineering recognizes the strategic importance of the Nordic funds in strengthening Aalto's cooperation in education and research with the Nordic Five Tech university alliance; *"Joining academic forces in building joint courses and degree programmes results in the best case in a higher quality programme than what one university alone can do and offer. Each partner university contributes its strengths to the joint programme and ease access to their research infrastructures. Sharing study and research facilities is clearly an advantage both for the academics and the students"*

Nordplus funding also offers funds for the curriculum development and thematic network development and administration.

- **Intensive Courses and Networks**

Educational projects developed through the 'North South South' (NSS) funding tool from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland have been successful in realizing Finland's development policy objectives. They in turn aid in fulfilling Aalto's strategy on creating a societal impact by providing learning and exchange opportunities for the teachers and students from the South. Aalto is coordinating four NSS projects with partners from Africa and Asia.

Promod Bhusal, Researcher and Project Manager of the NSS project in the field of lighting technologies appreciates the multicultural experience gained through organizing the student and teacher exchanges in the project. In his view, *"the project has been successful to support to enhance the skills and mobility of teacher and students in South and provided opportunity for students from Vietnam and Nepal to take advanced, multidisciplinary and integrated courses on a wide range of efficient lighting technologies available at Aalto University and also helped to improve student's communication, teamwork, and social interaction skills"*

Apart from NSS, the Nordplus and Erasmus+ funding tools also offer the possibility of organizing intensive courses, workshops, symposiums and networks.

- **Training and Capacity Building**

Tempus (currently under Erasmus+) projects funded by the EU-EACEA ((Executive Agency for Culture, Education & Audio visual) provide the possibility to cooperate with partners around EU, Russian Federation and Central Asia in modernization and reformation of national higher education structures. Often these projects pave the way to get to know the partners' complementary strengths and lead to research cooperation. "During the project realization the training courses for Russian specialists will be organized in Aalto University and in other partner European universities, which gives good opportunities for further cooperation in scientific and educational work. Joint publications will be done together with Russian partners" comments Olga Todoshchenko, Researcher from School of Engineering, coordinating the Tempus – Success (International Master Course Ensuring of product life cycle technological process efficiency in Russian universities) project with partners from Russia, Germany and Austria.

Similarly, the HEICI (Higher Education Institutions Institutional Cooperation Instrument) funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland provide opportunity to collaborate with partners in developing Asian, African and Latin American countries through staff training, curriculum development, staff exchanges and skills and knowledge building activities. Edward Mutafulwa, Researcher from the COMNET group value the *"knowledge exchange and cultural learning experience"* in working with universities from Tanzania and

and Roope Husgafvel, Researcher from the Clean Technologies research group is glad that their project with Mozambian partners has *“resulted in the joint development of a new study module on industrial environmental engineering including engagement of both industry and governmental partners”* and that his department has been able to extend their joint efforts beyond the current project.

- ***Development of cultural education and artistic activities***

Hanna Karkku, the Planning Officer for International Affairs appreciates the benefits of EU’s Culture funding programme (currently continuing as Creative Europe) which supports various culture related activities like artists in residence, art exhibitions, cultural workshops etc., Hanna explains how the Culture funded AH-DEsign project with Italy and French partners provided the opportunity to *“cooperate over borders, open new vistas to people’s everyday lives, gain experience of international project collaboration and study the possibility to combine the participatory processes of design and art educations”*.

The new revamped Creative Europe programme combines the former Media and Culture programmes and promotes cultural innovation and creativity by providing funds for the development of European networks, platforms for cultural work, film festivals, cinema networks and video games and support to access the markets.

4. Erasmus+ - The new EU funding for education, innovation and entrepreneurship

Erasmus+ the new single programme from the EU-EACEA for Education, Training, Youth and Sport for the 2014-2020 period brings new possibilities to develop international mobility, joint degrees, strategic partnerships, knowledge alliances, innovation in education and entrepreneurial activities. Some of the activities that can be funded through Erasmus+ are,

- Development, testing and/or implementation of innovative practices in pedagogical approaches and methodologies (ICT/learning mobility), strategic use of open educational resources
- Developing entrepreneurship mind-set and skills, and virtual transnational initiatives fostering entrepreneurial mind-sets and skills (including social entrepreneurship)
- New forms of personalized learning, strategic use of open educational resources and virtual mobility and virtual learning platforms and pedagogical approaches and methodologies (ICT/learning mobility)
- Stimulating the flow and exchange of knowledge between higher education and enterprises and
- Boosting innovation in higher education, business and in the broader socio-economic environment through jointly developing and implementing new learning and teaching methods

Eija Zitting, Development Manager, School of Chemical Engineering, considers Erasmus+ as a practical tool for implementing School’s strategic plans in the field of education. *“In every Aalto School’s roadmap there are targets for both internationalization and development of education cooperation. Erasmus+ serves as a platform for European level networks. Within this Erasmus+-network it is easy to utilize the knowledge and special skills of other partners and share best practices. The funding, which may be applied up to three years makes it possible to form larger development projects”*, comments Eija.

5. Service Development for International educational projects

The International Relations (IR) offices both at the school level and at university level provide the following services supporting the educational projects.

- Providing funding information & guidance on proposal ideas
- Providing guidance and help in partner selection
- Supporting applications in consultation with Legal counsel/OOP/HR/Financial services
- Reviewing and finalizing proposals for signatures
- Maintaining a database (MoveOn) on educational projects

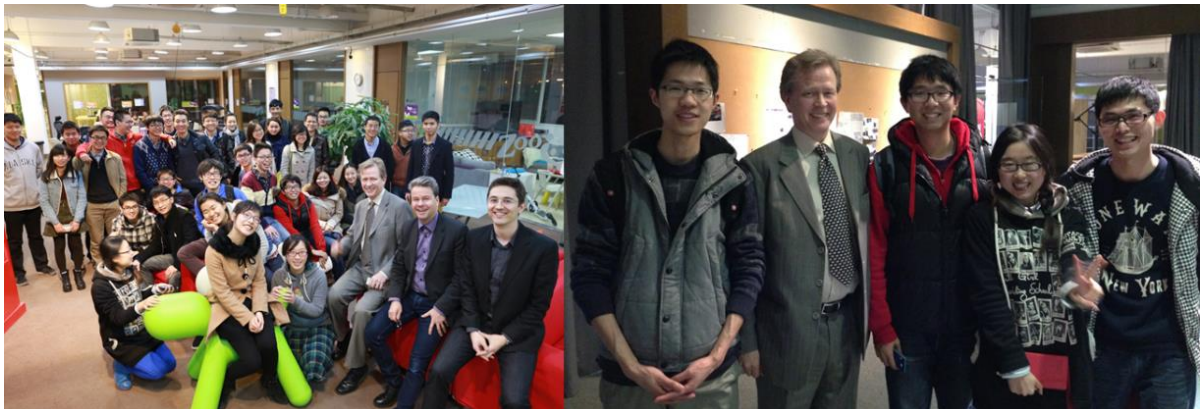
The IR has recently developed processes for developing educational projects as a much needed measure to ensure quality in developing and partnering in educational projects. The process development is ongoing, continuous & iterative. The process development will be extended to developing joint degrees and educational project management in the coming months. The process manual containing the process maps is available at <https://inside.aalto.fi/display/InternationalServices/Applying+for+funding>

For support and guidance in educational funding proposals, please contact – IR Services

6. Stories from educational projects

1. Aalto Venture Programme (AVP) develops minor programme in Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship with Tongji University through China Programme

CIMO's China programme funding has supported the development of the 'Design Innovation and Entrepreneurship minor program by AVP with Tongji. The funding covers the mobility of teachers and students and dissemination seminars. AVP is very keen to deepen the strategic cooperation with Tongji through this funding opportunity and utilize the mobility and networking opportunity to develop research cooperation.



(In the pictures: AVP teachers Timo Nyberg and Olli-Pekka Mutanen with Tongji students from their course 'Introduction to High-tech and Design Business and Venturing')

More Information: <http://www.tongji.edu.cn/english/classid-61-newsid-33834-t-show.html>

2. Aalto researchers train University staff in Mozambique in sustainability and clean technologies

Aalto University Clean Technologies group is helping their partners in Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), Maputo, Mozambique to develop their Master's curriculum in Wood Technology through the HEIICI funding for capacity building. The funding also supports the researchers to

implement expert training on sustainability and clean technologies and to develop UEM's capacity to establish strong links with industry, national sustainable development efforts and initiatives and other higher education institutes.



(In the pictures: HEICI project team, Prof. Andrade Egas, UEM and Prof. Olli Dahl, Researchers Roope Husgafvel & Mikko Martikka, Aalto hosting Elisabeth Ilskog First Secretary representing Research and Infrastructure, Embassy of Sweden)

More information: <https://blogs.aalto.fi/vagalhao/>

3. Dialogues for Sustainable Design and Art Pedagogy – a book on design in everyday life from Aalto ARTS
Aalto ARTS coordinated project AH-Design with the partners L'École de design Nantes Atlantique, France and the department of Design of Politecnico di Milano, Italy facilitated dialogues between generations and explored how design solutions could help especially the elderly in their everyday life in the three project cities. The project was funded through the EU-Culture funds and concentrated on improving art and design awareness among people by focusing on the sustainable design approach. The results of the project are presented in the book 'Dialogues for Sustainable Design and Art Pedagogy'.



(In the pictures: Participants involved in diverse social and participatory design workshops and TANGO travel exhibitions organized by the students exhibiting the project results)

Link to the book: http://www.taik.fi/kirjakauppa/product_info.php?products_id=289

4. UFISA provides exchange opportunities to Southern African students and teachers
Students and teachers from Southern Africa are participating in exchanges and benefiting from teaching and learning activities through UFISA (User-Centered Design for Innovative Services and Applications), the North South South project coordinated by Aalto School of Science with partners from South Africa, Botswana and Namibia, Lapland and Espoo. UFISA's goal is to bring students and local communities to work together on user-centered design in projects which aim at developing information and communication services. The services may include websites or mobile applications that support disadvantaged young people or that bring healthcare services to the community.



(In the pictures: UFISA Intensive course participants in Botswana and teacher Vikki du Preez & student Enkosi Xalisa from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in Aalto)

More information:

<http://sci.aalto.fi/en/current/news/view/2014-04-04-002/>

<http://web.aalto.fi/en/current/news/2013-03-14-002/>

http://www.athene.fi/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/kukka_2014_1_web.pdf

5. EnHANCE addresses the need for ICT education and training in Ethiopia and Tanzania
 Researchers from the Department of Communications and Networking (COMNET), School of Electrical Engineering are introducing new courses and pedagogical methods that strengthen the Master's and Doctoral-level curricula in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia and University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania through the EnHANCE project which is supported by HEI ICI funding. The funds also make it possible for the partners to learn new research methodologies and new initiatives to increase their industry outreach programs .



(In the pictures: HEIICI partners on a study visit to Aalto, Aalto researchers in different training activities in Ethiopia and Tanzania)

More information: https://research.comnet.aalto.fi/enhance/?page_id=2